

JANUARY 31, 1978

"THE UNKNOWN WAR"--TV SERIES
(VOICED PIECE, INSERTS AVAILABLE IN TAPE LIBRARY)

ANNCR: SOME OF THE GREATEST AND MOST DESTRUCTIVE BATTLES OF WORLD WAR TWO WERE FOUGHT ON RUSSIAN SOIL. YET, TO MANY PEOPLE FROM WESTERN COUNTRIES, THE CONFLICT ON THE EASTERN EUROPEAN FRONT WAS LARGELY AN UNKNOWN WAR. A NEW SERIES OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS CALLED "THE UNKNOWN WAR" IS NOW BEING PRODUCED IN THE SOVIET UNION -- FOR PRESENTATION ON AMERICAN TELEVISION. VOA'S SHIRLEY SEALY HAS MORE ON THIS UNUSUAL FILM SERIES.

VOICE: TELEVISION EXECUTIVE FRED WEINER WAS BORN DURING WORLD WAR TWO -- A PERIOD OF HISTORY THAT HE NOW FINDS FASCINATING. MISTER WEINER IS PARTICULARLY FASCINATED BY THE FACT THAT, UNTIL RECENTLY, HE KNEW VERY LITTLE ABOUT THE WAR-TIME ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNITED STATES OR ABOUT HOW THE SOVIET FORCES PLAYED SUCH A VITAL ROLE IN THE ULTIMATE ALLIED VICTORY AGAINST NAZI GERMANY.

FRED WEINER REASONED THAT THERE ARE MANY YOUNG AMERICANS WHO MIGHT BE IGNORANT OF -- AND FASCINATED BY -- THE STORY OF THE INCREDIBLE WORLD WAR TWO BATTLES THAT WERE FOUGHT IN EASTERN EUROPE. SO HE DECIDED TO SEE IF IT WAS POSSIBLE TO DO A TELEVISION SERIES ON WHAT HE CALLS "THE UNKNOWN WAR."

HIS FIRST STEP WAS TO CONSULT AN ACQUAINTANCE, HARRISON SALISBURY -- THE NOTED JOURNALIST AND HISTORIAN WHO, SHORTLY AFTER THE WAR, SPENT FIVE YEARS IN MOSCOW AS A CORRESPONDENT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES. MISTER SALISBURY HAD SEEN SOME OF THE MOTION PICTURE FILM SHOT BY SOVIET PHOTOGRAPHERS DURING THE WAR, AND HE KNEW THERE WAS MORE

VOICE: FOOTAGE IN SOVIET ARCHIVES. HARRISON SALISBURY AGREED TO
(CONT'D) WRITE AN OUTLINE FOR FRED WEINER'S PROPOSED SERIES ON THE
"UNKNOWN WAR"-- AND MISTER WEINER TELLS WHAT HAPPENED NEXT.

TAPE: CUT ONE -- WEINER

"I TOOK THAT OUTLINE TO MOSCOW, TO SHOW TO SOVINFILM, THE SOVIET MINISTRY, WITH THE IDEA OF BUYING THE ARCHIVE MATERIAL NECESSARY FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE SHOW. THE SOVIETS WERE RELUCTANT TO ALLOW ANY FOREIGN COMPANY TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY WITH THIS MATERIAL -- WHICH THEY CONSIDER TO BE PRECIOUS. A GOOD DEAL OF THIS MATERIAL HAS NEVER BEEN SEEN IN THE SOVIET UNION."

VOICE: AFTER SOME DISCUSSION, FRED WEINER AND HIS COMPANY -- AIR TIME INTERNATIONAL, A NEW YORK BASED COMMUNICATIONS GROUP -- AGREED THAT THE ARTISTS AND TECHNICIANS OF SOVINFILM WOULD HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RESEARCHING THE WAR FILM, AND PUTTING IT TOGETHER FOLLOWING THE OUTLINE BY HARRISON SALISBURY. ISAAC KLEINERMAN, AN AMERICAN FILM EDITOR WHO WORKED ON THE CLASSIC DOCUMENTARY SERIES "VICTORY AT SEA," IS EXECUTIVE PRODUCER AND DIRECTOR OF "THE UNKNOWN WAR," AND HE HAS BEEN WORKING WITH THE SOVIET CREW IN MOSCOW FOR A NUMBER OF MONTHS NOW.

OPT

NARRATING THE SERIES WILL BE BURT LANCASTER, A DISTINGUISHED HOLLYWOOD ACTOR. LANCASTER HAS ALSO SPENT TIME RECENTLY IN THE SOVIET UNION -- FILMING NARRATIONS USING ACTUAL BACKGROUNDS ON THE EASTERN FRONT.

"THE UNKNOWN WAR" WILL COVER THAT PERIOD OF HISTORY FROM JUNE 1941, WHEN NAZI TROOPS MADE THEIR SURPRISE ATTACK ON RUSSIA, THROUGH THE END OF THE WAR, AND THE CLIMACTIC BATTLE OF BERLIN. MOST OF THE FOOTAGE WAS SHOT RIGHT ON THE FRONT LINE. FRED WEINER LEARNED THAT OUT OF APPROXIMATELY

VOICE: TWO-HUNDRED AND FIFTY SOVIET PHOTOGRAPHERS COVERING THE
(CONT'D) EASTERN FRONT, OVER FIFTY WERE KILLED IN ACTION.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- WEINER

"THE ESSENCE OF THE STORY IS NOT SO MUCH THE SPECTACULAR NATURE OF THE FOOTAGE, BUT WHAT THE FOOTAGE TALKS ABOUT ... STORIES ABOUT LENINGRAD, WHERE A MILLION AND THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND PEOPLE DIED IN ONE CITY ALONE. THE BATTLE OF KURSK-OREL WHERE EIGHT THOUSAND TANKS AND FOUR-MILLION MEN WERE IN ONE BATTLE. THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO SAY -- TO SHOW THE MAJOR BATTLES THAT OCCURRED ON THE EASTERN FRONT, AND THE WINNING OF THESE BATTLES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ULTIMATE ALLIED VICTORY."

VOICE: THERE WILL BE TWENTY ONE-HOUR PROGRAMS IN THE "UNKNOWN WAR," SERIES AND THEY WILL BE SHOWN ON AMERICAN TELEVISION BEGINNING IN THE FALL OF THIS YEAR. MISTER WEINER'S COMPANY HAS WORLDWIDE DISTRIBUTION RIGHTS TO THE SERIES -- EXCEPT FOR THOSE COUNTRIES COVERED BY THE SOVIET INTERVISION NETWORK. IT IS NOT KNOWN YET WHETHER THE SERIES WILL BE AIRED IN THE SOVIET UNION.

THIS IS OBVIOUSLY AN IMPORTANT PERSONAL PROJECT FOR FRED WEINER -- AND THE PRODUCTION OF "THE UNKNOWN WAR" COULD ALSO BE IMPORTANT IN SOVIET-AMERICAN CULTURAL RELATIONS. MISTER WEINER SAYS IT IS NOT THAT UNUSUAL FOR THE TWO COUNTRIES TO COLLABORATE ON FILM PROJECTS. BUT HE ADDS THAT THIS PARTICULAR PROJECT BROUGHT ABOUT A UNIQUE COOPERATIVE MOVE BY SOVIET OFFICIALS.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- WEINER

"THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE AGREED TO OPEN UP THE ARCHIVE MATERIAL -- AND HAVE ALLOWED AN AMERICAN COMPANY TO CONTROL THE PRESENTATION OF THIS MATERIAL ... THAT'S PROBABLY THE SINGLE MOST INTERESTING THING. I'M JUST DELIGHTED THE SOVIETS ALLOWED US TO DO THIS -- TO PRESENT THE STORY TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. THE REACTION HAS BEEN ONE OF GREAT, GREAT INTEREST."

VOICE: THAT WAS FRED VWINER, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE U.S. TELEVISION
COMPANY, AIR TIME INTERNATIONAL, WHOSE FILM SERIES ENTITLED
"THE UNKNOWN WAR" IS BEING PRODUCED IN COOPERATION WITH
SOVINFILM OF THE U.S.S.R.

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